

The Conference of the Speakers of the EU Parliaments Bratislava, 26 May 2007

RAISING NATIONAL EUROPEAN AWARENESS

**Speech by Mr. Carlo Leoni,
Deputy Speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies
(Transcript)**

Mr. Speaker, fellow parliamentarians, ladies and gentlemen,

The Italian parliament has traditionally attached a very high priority to ensuring parliamentary consideration of the Legislative Programme of the EU Commission and the programmatic documents of the EU Council. In this way, national parliaments can have their say in the European decision-making process at an early stage, when priorities are being set. Parliamentary consideration of these documents can also help the subsidiarity checks, whereby parliaments can indicate both what the European Union should not be doing, but also state what the European Union should be doing in the interest of the European citizens.

Back in 1999, the Italian Chamber of Deputies adopted a special procedure, involving all standing committees and the full house in order to consider the programmatic documents of the Commission and Council. As of this year, our Committee for EU Policies has also decided to launch the parliamentary consideration of the Annual Policy Strategy of the European Commission for 2008. We have always attached a high priority to the simultaneous consideration of these documents by national parliaments. Despite all efforts, we have not been able so far to follow the schedule proposed by the Speakers' Conference for such simultaneous consideration of the Legislative Programme as the schedule proposed usually coincides with our budget session in Italy.

We are convinced that such simultaneous consideration by all national parliaments does strengthen the policy setting and scrutiny activity of each individual parliament. A simultaneous and visible debate can also provide the opportunity to raise the awareness of national public opinion with respect to the EU priorities. With respect to the latter goal, I think that we should be insuring greater visibility of the simultaneous debates when national parliaments are considering the EU Legislative Programme.

These goals might be achieved by choosing a shorter time frame. I am thinking of identifying just one day, a single public day to insure the external visibility for the media and the public opinion of parliamentary consideration at national level of the EU Legislative Programme. This does not mean that each individual parliament should start and end the consideration of the Programme in just one day, which would not be desirable or even feasible given the complexity of the Programme. Each chamber would be free to choose one day, the top day of parliamentary consideration of the Legislative Programme, which need not be the last day of that procedure.

Thank you again dear Speaker, dear colleagues.